



GIOACCHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)

Gioacchino Rossini was born into a family of musicians, in a small town in Northern Italy. His father, a butcher, also played the horn and ran the town band; his mother was a singer. Gioacchino first performed in public with his father's band—on the triangle! He also studied harpsichord, piano, horn, and voice. As a conservatory student, he later studied the cello.

Rossini achieved the most fame as a composer of operas. He was a lifelong devotee of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and set the same story as one of Mozart's greatest operas. Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* looks at the earlier life of the main character in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Rossini's last opera, in 1829, was *William Tell*. Following this, he focused primarily on sacred and instrumental music.

Using the Internet, encyclopedias, or other resources, answer the following questions about Gioacchino Rossini's operas. **(TEACHERS: SUGGESTED ANSWERS CAPITALIZED)**

1. How does the story in *The Barber of Seville* compare to *William Tell*?
BARBER IS THE STORY OF FIGARO, WHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG WOMAN WHOSE CARETAKER WANTS TO MARRY HER. TELL IS ABOUT THE FAMOUS SWISS MARKSMAN AND DEALS STRONGLY WITH POLITICS (ANY PLOT DESCRIPTION GIVES THE CORRECT ANSWER).
2. Which opera is a comedy?
BARBER OF SEVILLE
3. Which one of these operas is less often performed? Why?
WILLIAM TELL—IT IS SIX HOURS LONG.